VZCZCXYZ0000
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHPU #0180 0532213
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 222210Z FEB 10
FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0383
INFO HAITI COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEHPU/AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS PORT AU PRINCE 000180

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PREL PINR HA PGOV AID EAID
SUBJECT: HAITI POST-QUAKE ELECTION CALENDAR

REF: 10 PORT AU PRINCE 120; 10 PORT AU PRINCE 176

¶1. (SBU) Bowing to the inevitable, given the situation, on February 2 Haiti's Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) indefinitely postponed parliamentary elections originally scheduled in February 2010 (Ref A). The GOH has made no further announcements concerning elections. In a meeting with Speaker Nancy Pelosi on February 12 (Reftel B), President Preval asked for elections support to enable the elections to take place before the end of the year. He noted the CEP had lost its building, personnel, election records, and election materials. Voter displacement is also going to be a significant problem, as well as the loss of voter ID cards. Nonetheless, Preval said elections are a priority. The lack of an elected parliament, he told Speaker Pelosi, will be a significant problem.

¶2. (SBU) In the best of times, Haiti's electoral calendar is chaotic; by eliminating the prospect of February elections, the timeline is now even more jumbled. Combined local and presidential elections are currently scheduled for November 2010 (with primaries in November and runoffs in January). These elections have not yet been cancelled. The constitution would allow, under one interpretation, elections to be delayed until early 2011, but the government has not decided yet to move the November, 2010 announced date.

¶3. (SBU) Comment: While many Haitians argue the February elections were critical for both parliamentary effectiveness and the constitutional reform process, there is also consensus that the February elections were made impossible by the quake. Some members of the CEP and Parliament have discussed the prospect of consolidating parliamentary, local and presidential elections in November. Preval announced in a January 28 radio interview that he does not intend to stay in office beyond his term. While November-January elections are possible, they would require voter registration and electoral preparations to begin in August 2010, especially with the need to replace many voter registration cards and re-enroll migrated voters. Based on past election costs, combined November elections could cost at least USD 30 million and would tap MINUSTAH resources for election security. End comment.

¶4. MINIMIZE CONSIDERED
MERTEN